



Maryland Influenza Surveillance Report

Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration
Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Outbreak Response

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Synopsis

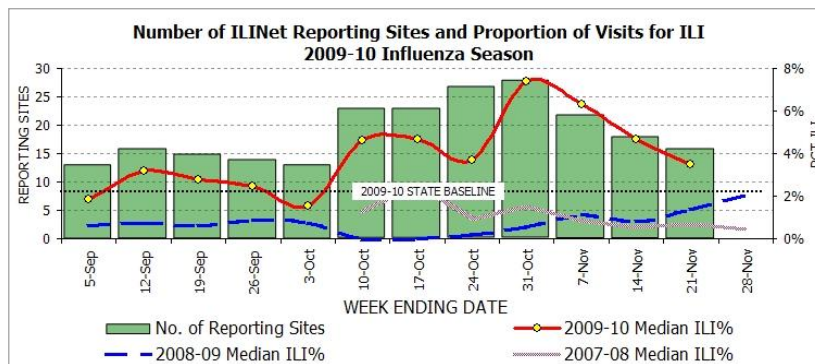
Influenza activity in Maryland **remained at an increased level** for the week ending November 21, 2009, and there now appears to be a decrease in surveillance activity indicators over the last four weeks. **Two outbreaks of influenza or influenza-like illness (ILI)**, all in institutional settings, were reported last week. **Reports from ILINet sentinel providers and Maryland residents continue to signal elevated influenza activity in Maryland, but a decrease is also noted from that system.** Based on these findings, the influenza activity level in Maryland remains at "widespread", where there are reports of flu activity from all over Maryland.

Outpatient Influenza-Like Illness Surveillance Network

Sixteen sentinel providers reported a median proportion of visits for ILI of 3.5% for last week. This is **above** the state-wide flu season baseline of 2.8% and above what was observed at this time last year. A total of 332 persons with ILI visited the 16 sentinel providers.

For more information about the ILINet Surveillance Network, visit:

<http://dhmh.maryland.gov/fluwatch>

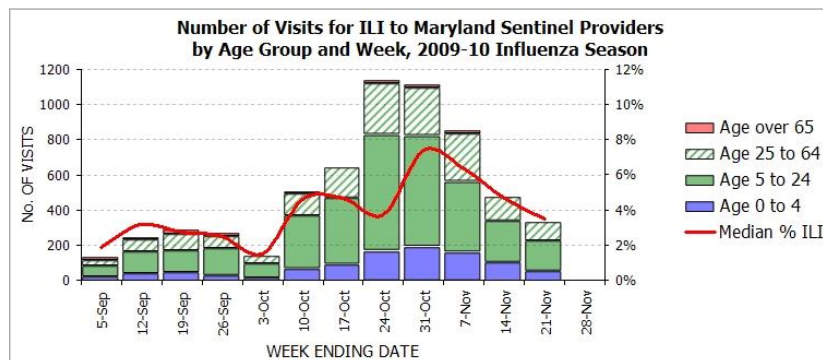


The median proportion of visits to providers remained above baseline last week, and it continues to be above what is expected in Maryland for this time of the year. A decrease has been noted for the last two weeks.

Most of the persons who sought care at ILINet sites were below the age of 25.

Influenza Activity Level in Maryland: WIDESPREAD

Predominant influenza strain in Maryland during week 46: Type A(H1N1) 2009 (formerly "swine flu" or "H1N1 flu")



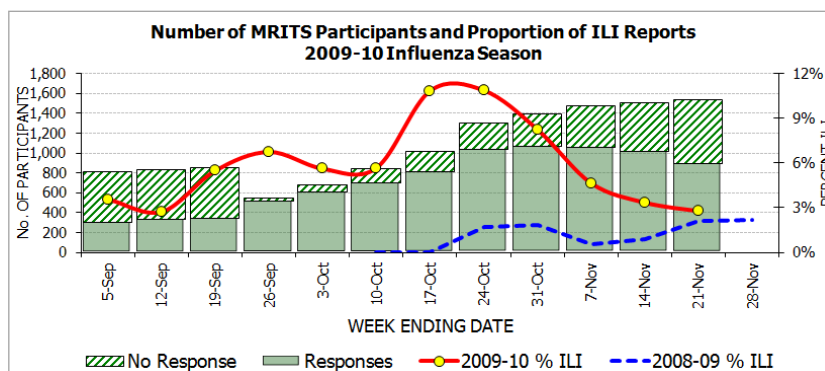
Join the MRITS fan page on Facebook at:

<http://tinyurl.com/mritsfb>



Maryland Resident Influenza Tracking Survey (MRITS)

A total of 1,541 Maryland residents were enrolled in the system as of November 25, 2009. Of these, 900 (58%) responded to the weekly survey. Of those that responded, 25 (2.8%) reported flu-like symptoms. For more information on the MRITS, visit: <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/flusurvey>



The proportion of participants reporting influenza-like illness continued to decrease for the fourth week in a row, and it remains above levels observed last year.

Flu Type	No. of Positives	% of Total
Type A	8,597	96%
Type B	274	3%
Untyped ²	94	1%
TOTAL	8,939	100%

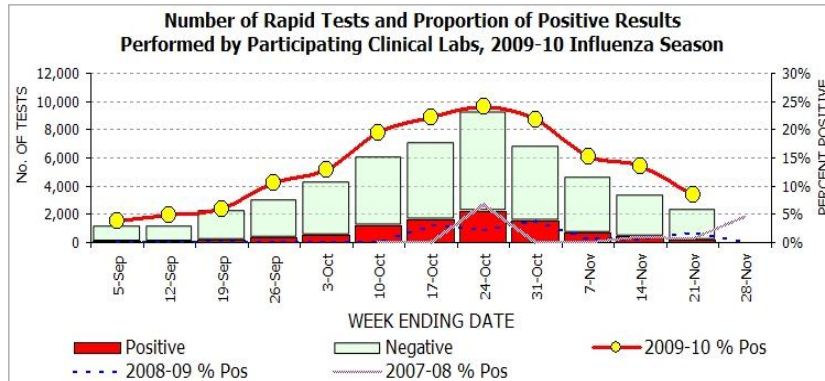
Number of positive rapid influenza tests by virus type, 2009-10 influenza season

Notes:

- 1 Rapid influenza tests are less accurate when the prevalence of influenza is low.
- 2 Certain rapid influenza test kits do not differentiate between type A and type B viruses

Clinical Laboratory Influenza Surveillance

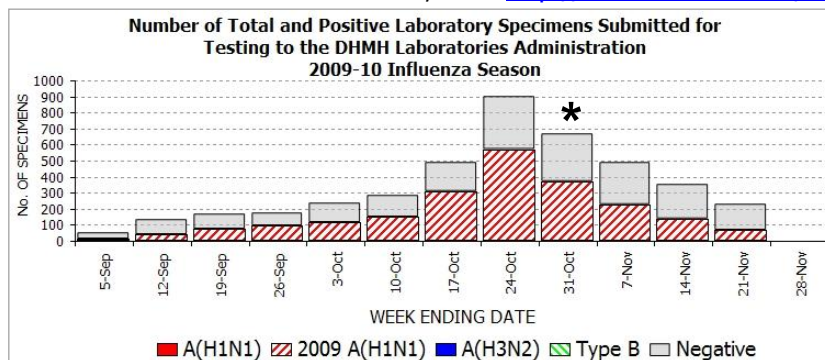
A total of 24 clinical laboratories reported 2,391 rapid influenza tests performed last week. Of those tests, 200 (8%) were positive, a decrease over the previous week (14%). Of the 200 positive tests, 168 (84%) were reported as type A influenza, and 32 (16%) were type B.^{1, 2}



The total number of tests performed and the proportion of those that are positive decreased for a fourth week after peaking at levels usually seen only during the winter months.

DHMH Laboratories Administration Influenza Testing

Last week, a total of 236 specimens were submitted to the DHMH Lab for influenza testing. Of these, 67 (28%) were positive by PCR technique. All were type A (H1N1) 2009 viruses. For more information, visit: <http://dhmh.state.md.us/labs/>

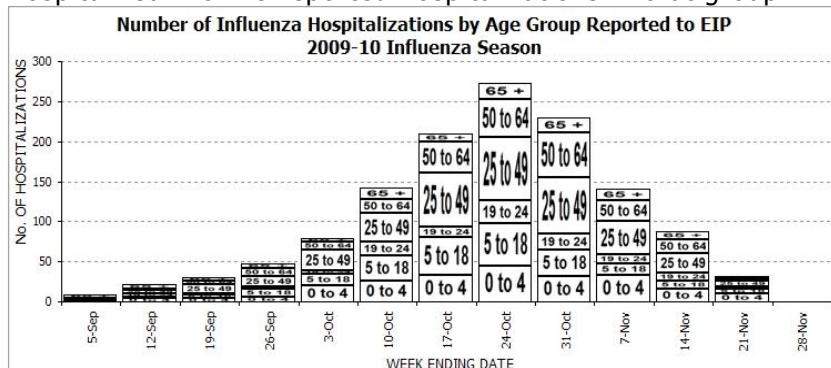


* A new sampling guideline brought a drop in the number of specimens submitted. 2009 H1N1 influenza continues to be the predominant strain.

Flu Strain	No. of PCR+ Specimens	% of Total
Type A(H1N1)	0	0%
Type A(H1N1) 2009	2,165	98%
Type A(H3N2)	2	<1%
Type B	0	0%
Equivocal	26	1%
TOTAL	2,193	100%

Emerging Infections Program Flu Hospitalization Surveillance

Last week, a total of 32 people were reported hospitalized due to influenza in Maryland. Those in the 0 to 4 age group constituted the largest section of those hospitalized with 10 reported hospitalizations in that group.



The younger age groups continue to make up most of the reported hospitalizations. 2009 H1N1 influenza continues to be the predominant strain in patients hospitalized for influenza.

For information on flu surveillance in states bordering Maryland, visit:

Delaware - <http://bit.ly/9Zkp3>

D.C. - <http://bit.ly/PNRVo>

Pennsylvania - <http://bit.ly/gggRF>

Virginia - <http://bit.ly/22C4g>

West Virginia - <http://bit.ly/vtodo>

United States flu info, visit:

<http://cdc.gov/flu>

Updated Interim Recommendations for the Use of Antiviral Medications in the Treatment and Prevention of Influenza for the 2009-2010 Season (9/22/09 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

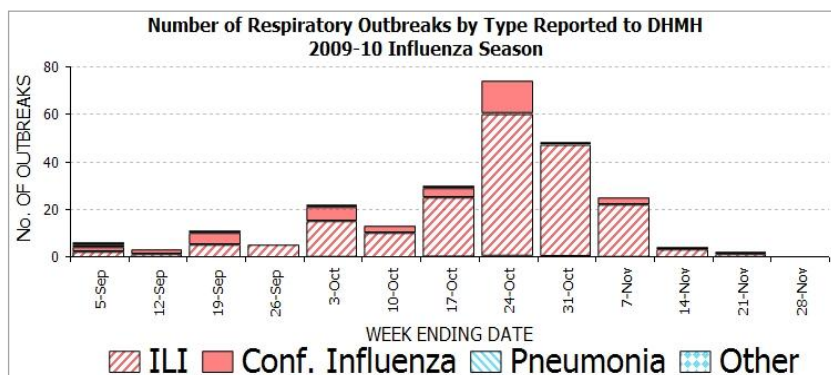
<http://bit.ly/48L0I4>

World Health Organization flu information at:

<http://bit.ly/b37z1>

Reports of Outbreaks in Institutional Settings

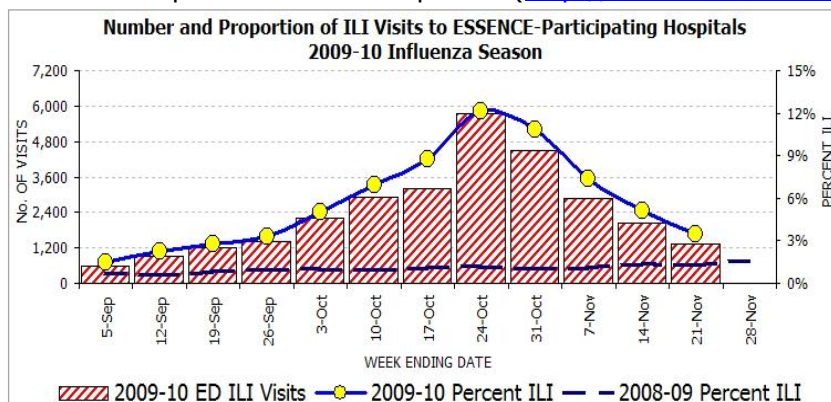
Last week, a total of 2 outbreaks of respiratory illness were reported to DHMH. One was an influenza-like illness outbreak, and the other was a confirmed influenza outbreak. Since August 30, 2009, a total of 243 outbreaks of respiratory illness in institutional settings have been reported.



The number of reported respiratory outbreaks decreased last week (2) compared to the previous week (4). ILI outbreaks are re-classified as flu outbreaks when laboratory confirmation is available.

Emergency Department ILI Reports (ESSENCE)

Last week, a total of 38,431 people visited Maryland emergency departments that participate in ESSENCE. Of those, 1,345 (3.5%) visits were for flu-like illness. This proportion is a decrease over the previous week. However, both remain elevated well above levels seen last year at this time. ESSENCE is a system monitored by the Office of Preparedness and Response. (<http://bioterrorism.dhmd.state.md.us>)



The proportion of visits to emergency departments for influenza-like illness continued to decrease for a fourth consecutive week, yet it remains above levels expected for this time of the year in Maryland.

**OFFICE OF
INFECTIOUS
DISEASE
EPIDEMIOLOGY AND
OUTBREAK
RESPONSE**

201 W. Preston St.
Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone:

(410) 767-6700

Fax:

(410) 669-4215

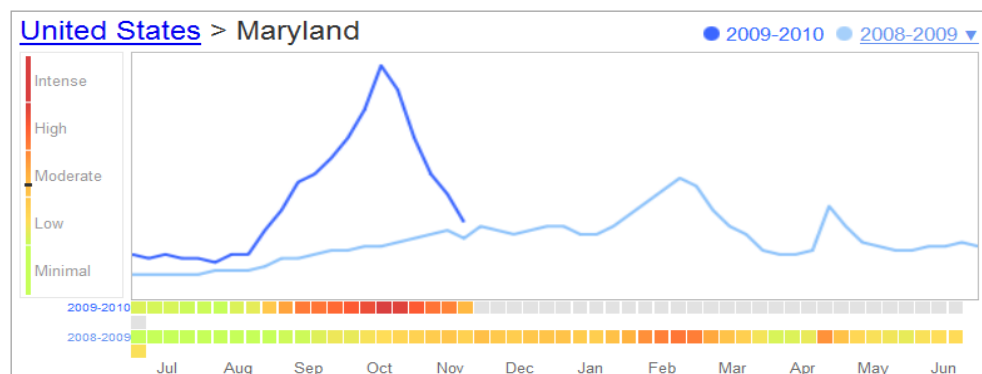
Visit us on the web:

<http://dhmh.maryland.gov/>

Google Flu Trends & Other Flu Tracking Reports

Google Flu Trends, which monitors on-line queries for flu-related terms, indicates that Maryland's flu activity continues to be "**moderate**", although declining over the last few weeks. According to Google, the levels of flu activity are similar to those observed during the 2003-2004 influenza season, though a bit earlier in the season.

(<http://google.org/flutrends>)



Influenza News Round-Up

The CDC Weekly Flu report for week 46 will be published on Monday, November 30, 2009, online at <http://cdc.gov/flu/weekly>.

CDC connects H1N1, severe bacterial infections ([Washington Post](#), 11/26): "Federal health officials on Wednesday linked the H1N1 flu epidemic to a sharp rise in the number of severe bacterial infections. Anne Schuchat, a physician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the national trend was "worrisome" but not unexpected. "In previous pandemics, there has been an increase in pneumococcal infections in younger people," she said. The illnesses are caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, a microbe often carried in the nose and throat. While often benign, the bacterium can cause bloodstream infections, fatal pneumonia and meningitis."

Greater use of vaccine for infection is urged ([The New York Times](#), 11/25): "There has been a "worrisome spike" in secondary bacterial infections among Americans with swine flu, federal health officials said Wednesday, urging more people at risk to get the underused vaccine that prevents some of those infections. Bacterial infections are a common and sometimes deadly flu complication for the elderly, said Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of immunization and respiratory disease for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But in this pandemic, they are becoming more common among children and younger adults."

CDC: H1N1 declining but still widespread ([CIDRAP](#), 11/20): "Pandemic H1N1 influenza activity is showing further signs of declining around the country but remains very widespread, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported today. The virus was widespread in 43 states last week, compared with 46 a week earlier, the CDC said in its H1N1 Situation Update. Visits to doctors for flu-like illness dropped for the third week in a row, and flu-related hospitalization rates began to decline as well. But both variables remained above normal for this time of year. Another 21 flu-related deaths in children were reported last week, including 15 involving confirmed H1N1 infections, the CDC said. That raised the total of confirmed H1N1 pediatric deaths to 171. "We are beginning to see some declines in influenza activity around the country, but there's still a lot of influenza everywhere," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, at a news briefing today."